

Please amend claim 1 as follows:

1. (once amended) A process for the preparation of an MR contrast agent[, said process] comprising:
  - i) obtaining a solution in a solvent of a hydrogenatable, unsaturated substrate compound and a catalyst for the hydrogenation of said substrate compound; and
  - ii) introducing said solution in droplet form into a chamber containing hydrogen gas ( $H_2$ ) enriched in para-hydrogen ( $p-^1H_2$ ) and/or ortho-deuterium ( $o-^2H_2$ ) [whereby ]to hydrogenate said substrate to form a hydrogenated imaging agent[;
  - iii) optionally subjecting said hydrogenated imaging agent to a magnetic field having a field strength below earth's ambient field strength;
  - iv) optionally dissolving said imaging agent in an aqueous medium;
  - v) optionally separating said catalyst from the solution of said imaging agent in said aqueous medium;
  - vi) optionally separating said solvent from the solution of said imaging agent in said aqueous medium; and
  - vii) optionally freezing the solution of said imaging agent in said aqueous medium].

Please amend claim 2 as follows:

2. (once amended) [A]The process [as claimed in claim 1]of claim 14 wherein said field strength in step (iii) is less than 50  $\mu\text{T}$ .

Please amend claim 3 as follows:

3. (once amended) [A]The process [as claimed in claim 1]of claim 14 wherein said field strength in step (iii) is less than 1  $\mu\text{T}$ .

Please amend claim 4 as follows:

4. (once amended) [A]The process [as claimed in claim 1]of claim14 wherein said field strength in step (iii) is less than or equal to 0.1  $\mu\text{T}$ .

Please amend claim 5 as follows:

5. (once amended) [A]The process [as claimed in claim 1]of claim 14 wherein said field strength in step (iii) is cycled in a first part from earth's ambient field strength to a field strength less than 0.1  $\mu\text{T}$ , [then]and in a second part back to ambient field strength again.

Please amend claim 6 as follows:

6. (once amended) [A]The process [as claimed in]of claim 5 wherein the first part of the cycle is [of the order of]approximately ≤ 1 ms and the second part is [of the order of]approximately 10-10000 ms.

Please amend claim 7 as follows:

7. (once amended) [A]The process [as claimed in any one of the preceding claims]of claim 1 wherein said process is carried out directly in water and wherein both said substrate and said catalyst are water-soluble.

Please amend claim 9 as follows:

9. (once amended) [An]The apparatus [as claimed in]of claim 8 wherein said hydrogenation apparatus is further provided with magnetic shielding such that the magnetic field within at least part of said hydrogenation chamber and/or within at least part of said conduit is <50 µT.

Please amend claim 10 as follows:

10. (once amended) [An]The apparatus [as claimed in]of claim 9 wherein said magnetic field is <1 µT.

Please amend claim 11 as follows:

11. (once amended) [An]The apparatus [as claimed in]of claim 9 wherein said magnetic field is <0.1 µT.

Please amend claim 12 as follows:

12. (once amended) [An]The apparatus [as claimed in any one of claims 8 to 11]of claim 8 wherein said conduit is provided with a liquid inlet between said hydrogenation chamber and said catalyst removal chamber.

Please add new claim 14 as follows:

14. (new) The process of claim 1 further comprising subjecting said hydrogenated imaging agent to a magnetic field having a field strength at or below the ambient magnetic field strength of the earth.

Please add new claim 15 as follows:

15. (new) The process of claim 1 further comprising dissolving said imaging agent in an aqueous medium.

Please add new claim 16 as follows:

16. (new) The process of claim 14 further comprising separating said catalyst from said solution of imaging agent in aqueous medium.

Please add new claim 17 as follows:

17. (new) The process of claim 14 further comprising separating said solvent from said solution of imaging agent in aqueous medium.

Please add new claim 18 as follows:

18. (new) The process of claim 14 further comprising freezing solution of imaging agent in aqueous medium.

**Remarks**

Applicants have amended the specification to cross reference the parent application which is a PCT application designating the United States. Applicants have also amended the specification to add the required headings and move the text to be in the required order. A copy of the specification encompassing the amendments is attached hereto.

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Applicants have amended claims 1-7 and 9-12. Applicants have cancelled claim 13, without prejudice and have added new claims 14-18. A version of the claims marked up to show the amendments, as well as a clean version of the claims encompassing the amendments, is attached hereto.

Applicants are submitting herewith a copy of the International Search Report which issued on International Application number PCT/GB00/01897, of which the present application is a continuation. All of the publications cited in the International Search Report are listed on the attached Information Disclosure Statement.

Applicants respectfully assert that all amendments are fairly based on the specification, and respectfully request their entry.

Respectfully submitted,



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